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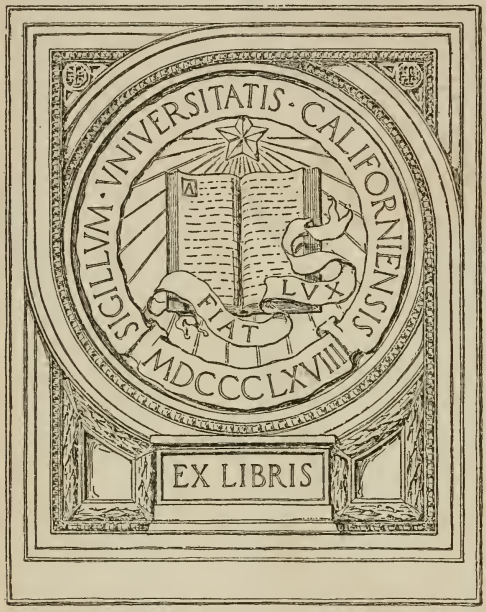
GIFT OF
Luther Parker



MY PHILIPPINE PICTURES

AND OTHER POEMS

Luther Parker

MY
PHILIPPINE PICTURES
AND
OTHER POEMS

LUTHER PARKER

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TO MY WIFE

As wife and I walk down the lane of life and love together,
Sharing pleasures, bearing pain, in bright and cloudy weather.
Greeting joy or meeting sorrow, always with a laugh,
I share today and plan tomorrow with my better half.

In the Spring our lane of life was set with roses sweet,
Violets and forget-me-nots danced onward with our feet.
Bleeding-hearts and pansies bloomed and reveled by our side,
I gathered hands and arms all full—you wore them as a bride.

The flowers of summer blossomed in profusion by the way,
And milestones wreathed by roses led us onward day by day.
We wandered through the rustling palms and 'neath the murmuring pine.
We've sat 'mongst fragrant orchids and beneath the wild grapevine.

The hearth of winter, lit by love, we now look forward to.
And living in the present we the happy past review.
So happen pleasure, happen sorrow, yet to wife and me,
Remains the hope of joy to-morrow and through all eternity.

Mrs. Maud Neal Parker

"...stand sheer against the sky"

"...as the hurrying waves race home"

MY PHILIPPINE PICTURES

Bring me a canvas broad and clean with pigments many and bright.
'Til I paint a picture of clouds and sky in a riot of color and light.
I would paint it just at the close of day as the tropic sun goes down
Behind the mountains, across a bay, and over a leaf-thatched town.

Go gather me colors of special hue that have never yet been seen,
Go ravish the sky for tints of blue and the earth for hints of green.
Bring delicate pink from the shell-strewn sands and white of the bright sea foam,
And the lavender tinge of grey palm boles that shelter some sea-girt home.

Bring me a canvas to paint the sea as the tide rolls in and dies
In a sheltered grove where the coral beach like a jeweled cincture lies.
Where a distant headland's misty blue is limned by the high flung foam.
And the curling crests show shimmering green as the hurrying waves race home.

I would paint the mountains that range on range stand sheer against the sky,
With tumultuous slopes of surging pines that climb to the light on high,
While the haze-screened amethystine hills show ever and anon,
And form the first of the stepping stones to the throne of Kabunian.

'Tis thus I would paint my pictures bright, 'tis thus I would choose my scenes,
From the length and breadth of sea and land in the picturesque Philippines.
I would paint them not for wealth or fame, I would paint them not for show,
But to grace the walls of Memory's halls of those who can see and know.

NOTE: Kabunian probably holds memories of the far off Pagan gods of North Borneo (Buni) the ancestral home of many Philippine people.

OVER ITOGON WAY

Sweep of the velvety ridges and song of the sentient ground,
My eyes are a-blind with your splendor, my ears are entranced with sound.
Bodily gripped to your surface I follow you like the mole,
But heights and depths of the mountains, I measure you with my soul.
In opal and gold of evening and rose of the dawn of day
I have spoken the earth-born spirits over Itogon way.

Elusive spirit of Nature, throned in the distant hills,
Lulled by the pine's soft sighing, praised by the chanting rills,
Hid by the next blue mountain, screened by your purple veil,
Lift but an edge to your lover ere his heart shall fail.
Consumed and athirst for your beauty I travel the whole long day,
Racing the anxious waters over Itogon way.

In the roar of the baguio's revels, in the sway of the furious storm,
On the cold pure heights of mountains, in depths of canyons warm,
Concealed, revealed or evasive, distant or near at hand,
Ever and ever seeking by ocean, or air, or land,
Again I have glimpsed your beauty in waterfalls at play,
In the midst of the worshiping mountains, over Itogon way.

"...opal and gold of evening..."

"...screened by your purple veil"

"...in waterfalls at play"

"...encased in its swart abode"

THE EXILE'S PRAYER

O help me Thou great Infinitude as the jangling convent bell
And the mumbled prayers of the barrio on the evening breezes swell;
Help me to feel that the darkened soul encased in its swart abode,
Is a part of the same great caravan and travels the self-same road.

Help me, the view of the ancient past with honesty to face,
And cast my soul in the dust of facts from the pride-girt heights of race.
Help me acknowledge my own fore-bears, in the history of man,
Were as wild as the fiercest Malay tribe, or the savagest pirate clan.

Chasten my heart when it swells with pride because of its raiment white
And teach it to feel that a soul's a soul though its vesture be black as night.
Make me content when my heart grows hot in the midst of the stubborn strife
With the sullen tao who declines to learn tho I give up my very life

In the seemingly thankless, useless task, that long before my birth
The hands of Fate had well designed as a test of the Saxon worth.
And the altruistic nation's sons who would usher in the morn
When lives would be willingly sacrificed for a strange race yet unborn.

WHEN THE NORTH WIND BLOWS

When the north wind blows in the Philippines
My soul flies free.
Crystal and Pearl are the waking dreams
That come to me.
Down from the distant frost-bound pole,
Driving aback
Mists and damps and the choking toll
Of the tropic rack;
Down to the very heart of heat
The pure breath goes,
And I am afloat in its incense sweet
When the North Wind blows.

Waving, the clean swept bamboos stand
Side by side.
Over the fragrant rice-sown land
The ripples ride.
High o'er head the soft clouds sweep
With vagrant will.
Comes from the wind-swept forest steep
The song bird's trill.
Earth-born mountain ranges bold
Would reach the snows.
Morns of silver and eves of gold,
When the North Wind blows.

Frost-touched breath of Sinukuan,
From cool heights free;
Peace and rest as the wind sweeps on
Come to me.
Hints of the matted orchid glades,
In perfumes rare;
Music of leaping cavalcades,
With mist manes bare.
Passion and hate and worry flee,
At each day's close;
Contentment reigns and my soul flies free,
When the North Wind blows.

"...clean swept bamboos stand"

"With mist manes bare"

"Polished mirror of gold,"

"...in from the salt, salt sea"

SUNRISE ON SUAL BAY

Polished mirror of gold, reflecting the gorgeous sky,
Ringed by the waiting hills as the day begins on high.
Morning showers asweep in the early rays of Sol,
Another wonderful day on the magical bay of Sual.

Song-birds praising the day, praising the day as one,
Down from the dew-drenched hills, singing in unison.
Over the waters calm with anthems matutinal,
Carols the feathery throng to the answering bay of Sual.

Gentle breezes of morn, in from the salt, salt sea,
Or whip of the stinging storm over the breakers free.
Calm or the baguio's rage, bonangas or vendaval,
Mirrored faithfully in the limpid waters of Sual.

Odorous shrubs and trees, gemming the hills of green,
Purple or red or gold of mutable shade or sheen;
Blossoms of yard or wood, cadena and sweet rosal,
Senses full to the brim on the beautiful bay of Sual.

THE BENGUET LILY

If you should ask the Benguet lily, "Whither goes the trail?"
Just watch its pointing finger that signs to hill and dale,
Along the knife-like ridges that the Igorotes love,
To far, upstanding mountains with their gleaming clouds above.

Then ask where goes the butterfly with irridescent wing,
And watch the upturned finger point to where the wild shrubs fling
Their flower-decked branches 'gainst the blue from parapets on high,
And thus your answer silently, "There goes the butterfly."

Go ask the modest Benguet lily, "Whither goes the spray,
That, rainbow-tinted, decks the falls throughout the summer day?"
"It answers to the earth's strong call though yearning to be free
And laughing, leaps through ferny dells towards the clamorous sea."

You may ask the Benguet lily, "Whither goes the breeze,
That plays among the branches of the balsam laden trees?"
It signs toward the valley where the cool, sweet breezes blow
To carry life and vigor to the swooning plains below.

Then ask the silent Benguet lily, "Whither goes thy soul,
When this short life has run its course and you have reached the goal?"
The patient finger points to earth beneath the brooding skies,
Where waits reincarnation when another Spring-time flies.

INSOMNIA

I toss and turn throughout the long, white night.
Within my netted cell the humid heat
Its clammy hands lays on my aching brow.
The lifeless air hangs heavy as a pall.
The fiendish jungle fowls, one by one,
Tally the snail-paced hours that lead
To victory or death.
The minor vermin
Of the racking, torturing night in frenzied
Orchestration rasp the jangling nerves.
Anon the canine crew, in howling group,
Bemoans its fate and bays the glaring moon.
While disconcerting frogs, through endless hours
Intone their tiresome, raucous symphony.

The goading clock strikes one, then two, and three,
When slowly, softly comes the brief, sweet hush
That ushers in the cool, fresh breath of dawn.
The spent and weary soul, protesting, falls
A myriad swift, tense leagues until at last
It rests beneath the rayless pools of sleep
Beyond the world of sound.
Too soon
Insistent duty knocks upon the door
Of laggard consciousness and, drugged with sleep,
The jaded soul takes up the reins again
And drives the tired, protesting body on
Towards the last, long stretch of endless sleep.

WINDS OF BAGUIO

Oh strident winds of Baguio,
What stress and surge as on you go!
What quest ye in the ardent plains
Five thousand urgent feet below?

Where Agno's many rivers flow,
The fronded palms that skyward grow,
Reach out to grasp in hot embrace
The cool sweet winds of Baguio.

Can'st tell us tales of long ago
Of age-old streams whose constant flow
Has carved yon canyon's purple depths,
Oh restless winds of Baguio?

Oh sighing winds of Baguio,
What reck ye of an age-long woe,
What spirit of uneasiness
Drives ever on as thus you go?

Oh fluvient winds of Baguio
Can'st tell us all we wish to know,
From whence to where and why? Oh winds,
Among the pines of Baguio!

"...cool sweet winds of Baguio"

"Among the pines..."

A CHILD ABOUT THE HOUSE

(To Marian)

When there's a child about the house the sun shines bright.
Sometimes an April shower, of course, but that's all right,
Because a rainbow follows showers as kisses follow tears,
And any trouble children cause is made up in love, the dears.

But when a child has been about and then has gone away,
It's like the hiding of the sun upon a summer day.
A dark-blue sadness enters in and fills up every room,
And there seems nothing more to life but deep, deep gloom.

Ah, children, little do you know how much your sunny ways
Make life worth living to the ones with whom you pass your days.
How much your happy presence means as you run in and out,
You'll never know till you are old and have a child about.

THE PIONEER

Gently untwine, Affection's arms that would hold you in fond embrace,
And sever love's soft tendrils that would bind you to one dear place:
Suppress the tears of bitter salt that your eyes may be clear to see,
For the pioneer must face his task with heart and hands both free.

The soldier who lists to pleasure's voice is lost to the firing line;
The bugle will sound the march in vain for the worshippers of the vine,
And he who loiters beside his love while his comrades march away,
Will merit the censure he'll receive at the end of the hard-fought day.

The pioneer must spring to his post with eyes that are never dim,
And see no form with the mind's fond eye but that of duty, grim.
His to control the rebellious heart that is faint for love's sweet sake,
For the pioneer must have no ties that a good, strong pull can't break

His to repulse the bolo rush as he stands on a dreary post;
Or spends the years in the crazing heat on a fever-laden coast.
His to endure the dead routine in some bare, unsightly place,
Far from the heartening life of home or the sight of a loved one's face.

His to limit the trackless wild while his brother man builds the town.
His to brazen the burning west 'til the last fierce sun goes down;
His to bear an untarnished shield, tireless, alert and brave,
'Til his sorrowing comrades lay him to rest in a pioneer's grave.

"..'til the last fierce sun goes down"

"...palm-decked portal..."

THE ROAD RUNS OUT TO SEA

The road runs out to sea at Lingayen.
Beyond the white topped waves, invisible,
The straight road runs to where the ~~far~~ low-set shores
Of far Cathay uprear from out the sea.
Held in the flesh I sit upon the sands
While far across the diamond studded waves
My spirit flashes beyond the dim horizon.

The road runs out to sea at Lingayen.
I linger where the swiftly rolling waves
Make restful music to the tired soul.
The harmonies that surge from out the deeps
Are voiced upon the ever tuneful shores
Along whose gleaming sands the seven-stringed waves
Thrum ever on and on unceasingly.

The road runs out to sea at Lingayen.
Beyond the deep-green fringe of fronded palms
The Hundred Islands float in high mirage,
Above and on the quiet, sleeping sea.
My thoughts run on beyond the Hundred Isles
To where the mirrored sky sinks in the sea
To azure depths unknown, unfathomable.

The road runs out to sea at Lingayen.
The palm-decked portal opens out envisaging
The changing glory of the sunset sky.
Ant-like, along the shores the human horde
Drifts aimlessly. Sunrise, sunset, calm,
Storm, or moonlit strand. And this is life?
The road runs out to sea at Lingayen.

BATTLE OF THE STORM GODS

Each May-time when the thunder heads roll billowing to the sky,
The Zambal storm-god draws his kris and shouts his battle cry.
While from the distant Baguio hills, sounds ever and anon
The throaty, low-toned, answering growl of the god of Kabunian.

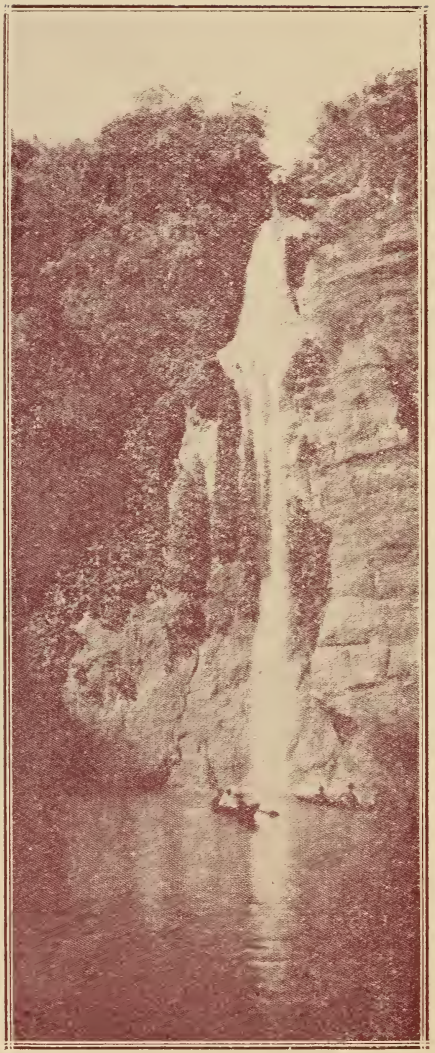
The Zambal storm-god leaves his crags enwrapped in leaping flames.
In brutal rage at all the world he tramples, kills and maims.
With league-long strides he sweeps in wrath across the cowering plain
And scourges madly left and right with whips of stinging rain.

The breezes race before him as maddening terror goads,
And carry pungent odors of the distant, rain-swept roads.
Banana groves wait huddled, their useless leaves show white.
As they stand in helpless terror beneath the blinding light.

The storm-gods meet, their weapons clash, the echoing thunders roll.
The deep-toned detonations strike terror to the soul.
The fight is on! Give way! Give ground! The fight is almost won.
The lightning kris of Zambal's god strikes home on Kabunian.

'Tis o'er! The storm-gods stagger past and leave us still and free.
While steep-banked rivers, choking full, sweep onward to the sea.
The trembling moonbeams venture forth to gild the storm-god's walls.
And wait without the craggy gate till the next swift battle falls.

"The lightning kris of Zambal's god..."



"...the sheer cliff's fall"

THINGS WORTH LIVING FOR

These are the things worth living for, it seems to me;
Play of the pliant, giant bole when the wind swings free.
Dimpling of velvety, grassy slopes as they skyward fling,
Droop of the dripping, fragrant ferns by the cold, sweet spring.

Purling of idle, wandering brooks as they onward go;
Glimpses of foaming cataracts as they downward flow;
Pungent aroma of sweet, rose lanes in the dewy morn;
Music and lilt of the wild bird's song from the silky corn.

Blue of the freshened, wind-swept sky and the swaying flowers:
Shift and change of the winding road and its hidden bowers:
Purple of distant mountain peaks and the sheer cliff's fall:
Answer of yucca studded hills to the desert's call.

Tinkle of bells in the distant dell in the drowsy noon;
Song of the earth to the listening soul when the world's in tune:
Long dim aisles with the moss festoons from tree to tree;
These and a friend with a kindred soul are enough for me.

ADIOS, PO!

Oh, good bye Filipinas, and good bye Orient!
Good bye to summer seas and skies, siestas and content.
Good bye to half a lifetime with its mem'ries laid away,
While the Pearl of the Orient sinks from sight as I leave Manila Bay.

Good bye to friends who yet remain, may fortunes still increase,
And many prosperous years pass by before they rest in peace,
And take their last siesta 'neath the rustling bamboo tree,
While I am taking my long sleep in God's country 'cross the sea.

We've tried our best, good comrades, to do our country's task,
With heart and brain and youthful zeal and all that one could ask.
Though they we've served now speed us in their hurry to be through
With alien aid—"forgive them for they know not what they do."

So good bye Mount Arayat, good bye old Banahao!
You'll be looking on Manila Bay a thousand years from now.
Good bye old Corregidor, we're going to sail away,
And leave these Isles forever, yes, forever and for aye.

"You'll be looking on Manila Bay a thousand years from now '

"...as the tropic sun goes down"

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